



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH
*1102 SE Quince Street • PO Box 47990
Olympia, Washington 98504-7990*

March 31, 2003

Island County Board of Health Members
6th and Main Street
Post Office Box 5000
Coupeville, WA 98239-5000

Dear Chairman:

Thank you and the other members of your board of health for allowing Don Sloma and me to come before you recently to learn more about your priority areas of concern.

We heard your board's concern about increasing demands and declining resources for public health infrastructure in your community to cope with bioterrorism, West Nile Virus and other health threats. We also heard your concerns about the growing mental health needs among those cycling through your local jails and the lack of resources to deal with these issues more appropriately.

I want to thank Mike Shelton for following up our meeting with an email restating his concerns about the need for adequate public health funding and the concern expressed by several during our meeting about the political viability of a property tax referendum to address it. As we said during our meeting with you, the state Board is on record as supporting adequate and stable funding for public health in our state. This will be the focus of our April 9 meeting in Olympia. At that time, the state Board will review Governor Locke's commitment to public health funding and will examine several legislative proposals on the subject. Please be assured, the state Board is committed to sharing the word with the public and within state government about the risks we face if we fail to provide an adequate and stable infrastructure for public health.

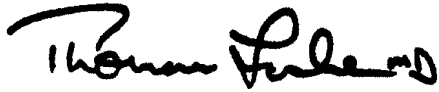
Our meeting with your board was very helpful to our ongoing efforts to learn more about community perspectives on public health issues. As I mentioned during our discussion, we intend to use the information we receive from you and other Boards of Health in our 2004 State Health Report. By law, the state Board must produce this report biennially, together with recommendations for state health priorities for the ensuing biennium. You may see the 2002 State Health Report at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/sboh/Pubs/2002SHR.pdf>

If you would like to provide additional information, other community perspectives or other suggestions for statewide health priorities, please feel free to call or write. We will be accepting additional input from local boards of health for the state health report until September 30, 2003. We are open to hearing from you about emerging issues at any time.

If you have any further questions or requests, please call the Board office at (360) 236-4110 and one of our staff would be happy to assist you in anyway possible.

Again, thank you for allowing us some time with you in your busy schedules.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas Locke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and a stylized "L".

Thomas Locke, M.D., M.P.H., Vice Chair
Washington State Board of Health